



## CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

### CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
112 East State Street

October 18, 2007

5:00 p.m.

#### Members

Tony Abbott  
Brant Attaway  
John Bennett  
Gerald Cook  
Mark Egan  
Phyllis Hardeman  
Jason House  
Charles Hutchinson  
Chandler Kinsey  
Beth Kinstler  
Jack Knops  
Henry Levy  
Helen McCracken  
Clint Murphy, Chairman  
Russell Peterson, Vice Chairman  
Linda M. Smith  
Joe Steffen  
Stephen Traub  
James Weaver

#### Representing

Chatham County  
City of Savannah  
City of Savannah  
City of Bloomingdale  
Chatham County  
Town of Thunderbolt  
City of Savannah  
City of Bloomingdale  
City of Tybee Island  
City of Savannah  
City of Savannah  
City of Tybee Island  
Town of Thunderbolt  
Chatham County  
Chatham County  
Port Wentworth  
Chatham County  
City of Savannah  
City of Savannah

#### Present

X  
  
X  
  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X  
X

#### Others Present

Jane Love  
Wykoda Wang  
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP

#### Representing

MPO  
MPO  
MPO

X  
X  
X

**I. Introduction of New Members**

Chairman Clint Murphy called the October 18, 2007 Citizens Advisory Committee meeting to order. He introduced the new members, Gerald Cook and Charles Hutchinson, but neither was there to be recognized.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

**CAC Action: the motion to approve the agenda as presented carried with none opposed.**

Mr. Mark Wilkes announced to the committee that the CUTS/MPO was presented with the 2007 award from the Georgia Planning Association for Innovative and Effective Planning Process for their Transportation Amenities Plan and Context Sensitive Design Manual. Chairman Murphy pointed out that CAC committee members, Beth Kinstler, Jack Knops, and John Bennett had been actively involved in this project.

**III. Action Items**

**A. Approval of August 16, 2007 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting minutes**

It was moved and seconded to approve the August 16, 2007 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting minutes as submitted.

**CAC Action: the motion to approve the August 16, 2007 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting minutes carried with none opposed.**

**B. Endorsement of the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan**

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the plan to the committee. She defined the plan as a locally developed coordinated plan that identifies transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those with low incomes and then provides strategies to meet those needs. This plan is a requirement of SAFETEA-LU. Ms. Wang also explained the three funding categories. CAT has requested to be the Designated Recipient for the 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute) funds and 5317 (New Freedom) funds. The Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) administers the 5310 funds. At this time the 5310 program is not included in this plan, though it is the intention to coordinate with DHR and incorporate the 5310 program into the future plan.

This plan outlines the goals and objectives and the public involvement process of plan development. It identifies where the target populations are located, where potential human services and other destinations of these target populations are located, and also identifies the existing and expected service gaps. Strategies and projects are proposed to meet the transportation needs.

Strategies/projects were evaluated by four criteria:

- Is it an existing service or does it meet a need?
- Quality of service
- Implementation
- Coordination

Based on the criteria, the projects were sorted into four tiers:

- Tier #1 – existing and planned projects already in the TIP
- Tier #2 – short range expansion of services projects
- Tier #3 – medium range expansion of services projects
- Tier #4 – long range expansion of services projects

The next steps are to use this plan for the following:

- Apply for 5316 and 5317 funding
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between CAT & MPO for administration and planning
- Coordinate with DHR for 5310 program
- Ensure consistency with the LRTP & TIP

The MPO is recommending that the advisory committees endorse the Coordinated Plan including the Program Management Plan, which describes CAT's procedures for administering the plan, as the designated recipient of funding.

Chairman Murphy opened the public hearing. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Chairman Murphy invited the Committee to begin discussion.

Chairman Murphy asked why the user surveys mentioned were in the 4<sup>th</sup> tier. He believes user surveys should be continuously done because it's important to continuously and proactively review the service and make it better. It shouldn't be one of the last things considered. Ms. Wang asked if he proposed moving it to Tier 1. He commented that it should be continuously done. If that is Tier 1, then yes.

Mr. Russ Peterson asked how to measure the utilization. Why would we continue to fund something that no one uses? Ms. Wang commented that CAT's Transit Development Plan documents the utilization. This plan addresses use of 5316 and 5317 funds which are for bus route 2, bus route 6, and ferry service, which are highly utilized.

Ms. Wang noted that the user survey was an expensive option. While interviews with users will be conducted, the actual survey would be expensive. Mr. Murphy is not advocating a great deal of expense, but wants to be sure it's monitored. Ms. Wang explained that CAT's pass system records usage and the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) channels any complaints about Teleride service, so we actually are identifying needs and services on a continuing basis.

Mr. Chandler Kinsey asked if adding Teleride buses was possible in order to meet the very needs that this plan is targeting, instead of overhauling the entire system. Ms. Love noted that one must qualify to use Teleride. Ms. Wang explained that Teleride vehicles are very expensive. Purchasing buses is staggered over different years. Ms. Wang commented that Teleride is overburdened by the current demand. It is hoped that with proper user training, some of the Teleride users could use the fixed route buses to meet their transportation needs.

Ms. Helen McCracken believes many people are intimidated by the large buses, particularly the dark glass that prevents a user from seeing who and what is on the bus before getting on. Others commented that the buses are safe and the drivers are trained.

Mr. Jason House asked if there is any plan for making it easier for the public to use the transit system. He mentioned other communities that have interactive web sites where the customer can type in the address of their location, the destination address, and the time of the trip, and then a recommended route and times appear on the screen. Ms. Wang described CAT's current website and noted it only gives the routes and is not interactive.

Ms. Beth Kinstler commented that when she began riding the bus, she went to the website first, then called CAT and received the information she needed. CAT staff was very helpful.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan.

**CAC Action: the motion to endorse the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan carried. Mr. Henry Levy abstained.**

**C. Endorsement of Requested Amendment to the FY 2008-2011  
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction for  
bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008**

It was moved and seconded to dispense with the reading of the MPO staff report.

**CAC Action: the motion to dispense with the reading of the MPO staff report carried with none opposed.**

Chairman Murphy opened the public hearing. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Chairman Murphy opened the floor to discussion from the committee.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 TIP to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008.

**CAC Action: the motion to endorse the requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 TIP to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008 carried with none opposed.**

#### **IV. Status Reports**

##### **A. Traffic Impact Analysis Process**

Mr. Wilkes presented the staff report to the committee. He noted that an informal process for examining traffic impacts of proposed developments has existed for years. The City and the County have the final say in the approval of developments. The MPO is trying to standardize the process of the traffic impact analysis and involve the parties at an earlier stage so that the traffic impact can be considered when the development comes before the MPC. In the past this information has not been available. This is a way to standardize the requirements, be consistent, provide a time line and set expectations. The proposed process identifies the thresholds that would trigger a traffic analysis. It gives developers and plan reviewers guidelines so they know if and when a traffic impact study is necessary. Mr. Wilkes reviewed in his presentation some of the specific thresholds and standards with the committee.

Chairman Murphy asked if this will be formally instituted. Mr. Wilkes indicated that they are currently working to get it into an ordinance format to go before the City and County by the end of the year or early next year.

Mr. Levy asked if the information of a traffic impact study could prevent a developer from using that site for a certain purpose. Mr. Wilkes explained that this traffic impact study process does not change who makes the final decisions. The City or County engineer will still have the final recommendation and this process does not change that. This process is designed to provide information in a more timely fashion.

Ms. Kinstler asked if this requires developers to do a traffic impact analysis before submitting a project to the MPC. Mr. Wilkes responded yes, if the development meets the thresholds described.

Mr. John Bennett asked what currently triggers a traffic impact analysis. Mr. Wilkes explained that it is currently inconsistent. Developers can receive different answers from different agencies, i.e. City, County, MPC. This process seeks to correct this.

### **B. Effingham Parkway**

Mr. Wilkes reported to the committee that MPO staff has received a traffic study from Effingham County's consultants, which was conducted to determine the logical termini of the future Effingham Parkway. The parkway proposal was originally planned to terminate at SR 30. Chatham County proposed that it be extended to I-95. This new study suggests a preferred alternative that would tie Effingham Parkway directly into Jimmy DeLoach Parkway in the vicinity of I-95. MPO staff still feels it is important to connect to I-95 and to the planned Northwest Tollway, so they will probably request that GDOT conduct a study of a connector from Effingham Parkway to the planned tollway.

It was asked who funds the Chatham portion of the parkway. Mr. Wilkes noted that there isn't even a feasibility study yet. It is too early to say. There is talk of public/private initiatives since federal funding is drying up.

### **C. Traffic Count Locations for CMP Update**

Ms. Jane Love referred the committee to the handout prepared in response to questions she had received from Ms. Helen McCracken and Mr. Stephen Traub since the last CAC meeting. They had asked for some directional traffic counts in the vicinity of Victory Dr. and Skidaway Rd. and how the traffic counts shown on the 2004 Traffic Counts map were collected. She had advised Ms. McCracken and Mr. Traub that the MPO's consultants were collecting new traffic counts in the area of concern this month, as part of the update of the Congestion Management Process (CMP). She displayed a map showing the locations where the MPO is currently collecting data along Victory Drive in the vicinity of Skidaway Rd. and along portions of SR 21. Regarding the procedure of the counts from 2004, Ms. Love said that GDOT performs the annual counts and MPO staff creates the map. The handout provides answers to specific questions about GDOT's procedure, which she obtained from the GDOT web site. Ms. Love noted that the staff will continue to apprise the committee of the progress of the update of the MPO's CMP.

## **V. Subcommittee Reports**

### **A. Short Term Improvements Committee**

Mr. Stephen Traub reviewed a written report that he distributed to the Committee at this meeting. He reported that the previous proposal concerning center turn lanes on Waters Avenue has been turned over to the City traffic engineer and is under discussion. The mis-directing signs on E. President St., at the entrance of the Truman Parkway, have now been corrected. The trash accumulating on Tybee Road continues to be a challenge that they will continue to work on. Chairman Murphy relayed the information that the road in

question is available to “adopt” through the “Adopt a Highway” program. Mr. Traub reported that John Bennett is advocating short term improvements to the existing Habersham bikeway.

Mr. Traub thanked Ms. McCracken for her detailed study of a proposed alternate route for westbound traffic on Victory Drive to get to Skidaway Rd. and points south. This alternate involves Whatley and Sunset. Mr. Levy said that he detours through that area experiences no traffic delays. Chairman Murphy asked for confirmation that any proposal for a traffic light in this area should be directed to the City traffic engineer. Mr. Wilkes confirmed this. Mr. Wilkes said that staff was planning to develop some recommendations in the CMP to enhance alternative routes for the short trips between the commercial destinations in the Victory Dr./Skidaway Rd. area. Rowland Avenue is being considered as an alternative. Ms. McCracken mentioned that a large building at the corner of Whatley and Rowland, on the right, blocks the view of Rowland, making it a difficult turn. Mr. Wilkes pointed out the different approaches to the problem expressed by this committee and the MPO. It appears that the committee members see this alternative route as a by-pass for through traffic, i.e. traffic that is not destined for this commercial area of Victory Drive. The MPO believes the increase in traffic is connected to the commercial re-development in the area. The MPO is looking for a way to handle the short trips within this commercial area which currently have no alternative except to use Victory Drive. Ms. Love added that if the short trips could be re-routed off of Victory, then the through-traffic could proceed on Victory in a more efficient manner.

Ms. McCracken believes her proposal would get thousands of cars off of Victory Drive and out of the intersection of Skidaway Road.

Mr. Knops expressed concern about what happens with the proposals that this subcommittee makes. Chairman Murphy reported that he has passed them to the City traffic engineer. Mr. Traub confirmed that the purpose of the subcommittee is to pass these ideas along for further detailed study by the appropriate City or County department.

Mr. Traub reported a blockage on Victory Drive of a right-turn lane leading to the shopping center. The merge lane from the Truman does not continue into the right-turn lane for the shopping center, and the traffic backs up to the Truman Parkway. Ms. Love said that GDOT is aware of and is working on this issue.

Chairman Murphy reported that he has not received any negative comments as he passes these suggestions on to the appropriate parties.

It was moved and seconded to approve the two new recommendations from the subcommittee’s report and pass the information along to the appropriate parties.

**CAC Action: the motion to approve the two new recommendations from the subcommittee’s report and pass the information along to the appropriate parties was carried with none opposed.**

**VI. Agency Reports**

There were no agency reports at this time.

**VII. Other Business**

There was no other business at this time.

**VIII. Other Public Comments**

There were no other public comments at this time.

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the October 18, 2007 Citizens Advisory Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love  
Transportation Planner